

INTRODUCTION

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information about particular villages to determine their suitability. Finally, we chose Hsin Hsing village, in Pu Yen Hsiang, Chang-hua Hsien, since of the villages being given final consideration, it was the only one in which housing was available.

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At the outset it was difficult to determine the typicality of the village chosen, but Hsin Hsing does not appear to differ significantly from other villages in the area. Like any other village it has its own characteristics, but as far as I could determine, aside from a somewhat smaller average landholding per family compared to other villages of the district, few cultural or social differences of major consequence existed.

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For more than sixteen months, during 1957-1958, my wife and I lived in Hsin Hsing, conducting both formal and informal interviews. As residents of the village living in one wing of the home of a former village landlord, we were invited to almost all village functions. By living in the village, we became semiparticipant observers and could observe the daily interaction among people, recognize and identify individuals, and better understand relationships between families and between their members. We actually established reciprocal visiting relationships, much like those the villagers had amongst themselves, with a great many people of Hsin Hsing and some from neighboring villages.

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When we moved into the village we were formally introduced to the entire population at a regular village meeting. At that time the village elected leaders, and I told the villagers that I was interested in the customs of the Taiwanese village people. Soon after getting settled, we began the actual study by mapping the village and surveying all the village households to determine the composition of the families. During this survey, we became acquainted with a large number of villagers with whom we talked about village life and some of its problems, gaining some initial insights into the village's economic situation and the similarities and differences among village families.

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Although a number of especially articulate villagers were developed as key informants over a period of time, in actuality almost the entire population served as informants. During the early part of the study in Hsin Hsing, interviews were carried on through conversations; most of the data were recorded out of sight of the informants after the interviews were completed. When the informants were fully at ease with us during the later phase of the research period, interviews were recorded on the spot. In order to obtain quantifying data to supplement the unstructured interviews, a limited number of additional surveys and questionnaires were also conducted during this time.

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From the very beginning of our stay in Hsin Hsing, the villagers showed great interest in our presence. In a sense, many of them seemed

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• 123 to be quite pleased that we had decided to live in their village. A number of them actually pointed out that life was now much more interesting and exciting for them. For one thing, our presence in Hsin Hsing (we were the only Westerners ever to have lived anywhere in that area) resulted in an increased number of visits from outside relatives and friends. Many of these people came to visit in the village with the idea of at least getting a view of the foreigners. Not long after our arrival we learned that some Hsin Hsing villagers, upon meeting or visiting relatives or friends from other villages, would actually extend an invitation to them to "come visit and I'll take you in to have tea with the Americans." While some villagers or their guests would be too embarrassed to actually come into our house, they were not too embarrassed to stand at the windows or doors and peer in at us for a length of time. When this occurred, we would frequently issue a personal invitation to come in and sit awhile. This kind of entertaining proved to be quite fruitful in that early in our stay we got a very good idea of the extent, the nature, and the kind of relationships that Hsin Hsing villagers have beyond their own village. It also gave me some opportunities for entree into the other villages from which these people came and therefore served as an important means for gathering information and pictures of the area villages. On the basis of such contacts and others we were then frequently invited to visit neighboring villages and even some not so near.

[126] During the early part of our stay in Hsin Hsing, the villagers generally tried to keep us from witnessing or even hearing about the various and frequent magical rituals which most often took place late in the night. Gradually, as we began to make several friends in the village who took an interest in us and our work, we were quietly informed of the performance of these rituals. Once we had managed to be present at one or two of these rituals, our presence became an accepted matter-of-fact occurrence. After a brief time I was even able to take photographs of the various magical activities which are described in some detail in later chapters.

Within a month after we had taken up residence in the village, apparently as a matter of courtesy we were invited to a wedding festival in Hsin Hsing. Our presence seemed to make a big hit with the villagers and especially with their guests, who soon happily engaged me in various kinds of drinking games. With this initial contact experience over, there was scarcely a single festival or a happy occasion or even a funeral ceremonial to which we were not invited. It was not at all unusual for me to be asked to make a brief public talk to congratulate the newlyweds or to take part in a funeral by wearing a mourning band for the deceased. When village festivals were being planned and money collected from each village family to finance the occasion, after

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several months in the village we were asked to pay the head tax for all members in our household in much the same way as the villagers paid it. We were considered by the Hsin Hsing villagers as part of the population.

In the later part of the fieldwork, I was at times actually asked by villagers, including the village mayor, to advise them on the settlement of a conflict in which at least part of the village was engaged with another village. However, our virtually complete acceptance by the villagers did not come until we had been in the village nearly a year, when I was unavoidably involved in a conflict in which at least part of the Hsin Hsing villagers were engaged with a neighboring village. In the situation, which concerned the Li Fan case discussed in Chapter 6 (and which has been described in detail in an article I wrote in 1959), I did find it necessary and perhaps even desirable to render some advice and assistance. Once this had been done successfully, I found that what formerly had been a good situation for fieldwork had now turned into an excellent relationship with almost the entire village. Thus, whereas until that time I was still recording interview notes in private, I could now record interviews as they were carried on. Most villagers who would usually spend time talking with me only when they had nothing else of importance to do now willingly made themselves available for interviews whenever it was at all possible. What I had earlier recognized as a good field situation, and it was, had now turned into an ideal one.

Relations with the local officials in the district Public Office (similar to our town hall), the district police, the district Farmers' Association, and the local land records office were of course also extremely important. Access to public and private records such as demographic data, maps and surveys, and land tenure data records depended upon my relationships with these people. For the most part, I was able to secure all the necessary available official records, though this always entailed the utmost patience.

However, the availability of written historical records, documents, and statistics for the period prior to about 1950 was unfortunately rather limited. While a great deal of literature written during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of the Ch'ing dynasty, e.g., *Chang-hua Hsien Chih*, about Taiwan in general is available, such writings seldom deal with specific local areas. This seems true also of Japanese material. In addition, it has been a frequent Chinese historical practice to copy the material for such books from older chronicles. Therefore, books about Taiwan do not adequately describe the particular area during the period prior to 1950. (This problem is further discussed in a note for Chapter 2.)

The absence of family records in Hsin Hsing village makes it diffi-

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159 boring village of Ta Yu. The reason for this was that Li Fan, the Hsin
312 Hsing man, had taken water from a public irrigation ditch which was
628 at the time considered to be carrying privately owned rather than public
[474] water. The men from Ta Yu claimed that the water which Li Fan
had taken was from the cooperative pumping station of which he was
not a member. As they were beating him senseless with a metal hoe, his
father tried to come to his aid and was also beaten.

159 The cooperative station, which pumps water from a nearby river, is
312 located in the larger and wealthier neighboring village of Ta Yu. Most
628 of its members are from Ta Yu village, although there are several
474 members from other nearby villages, including a few from Hsin Hsing.
685 Because the great majority of the pumping station members are Ta Yu
villagers, these members have the controlling hand. Members from
other villages have little if any voice in the making of cooperative
policy. The cooperative's large size caused the Ta Yu members to feel
that they had little to fear from outsiders. Apparently, the cooperative
had unofficially agreed that any outsider caught taking the cooperative's
water should be beaten as an example to others and that the association
would fully back whoever did the beating in case any trouble should
ensue. Before the beating of Li Fan and his father several other such
incidents had gone unchallenged.

159 When Li Fan and his father were carried back from the fields, word
628 quickly spread through Hsin Hsing village. The villagers were at once
685 incensed and felt that those responsible for the brutality should be
625 punished. The police were notified at once, and a doctor was called to
123 treat the men's severe wounds. But until the doctor or police arrived, I
was called in to administer first aid—mainly to stop the bleeding—and
also to photograph Li Fan in his beaten condition.

159 The two police officers who soon came on their bicycles from the
625 local police station were also angry at this new violence and recorded
694 the stories of the two victims and the witnesses. Later, however, when
554 an attempt was made to arrest the two Ta Yu villagers, they insisted
628 that they had not started the fight, had only fought back in self-
defense, and in fact had themselves been beaten by Li Fan and his
father. This, under the law, meant that the accused would not necessarily
be held by the police, especially since a wealthy and influential man
in the area who was a friend of the Ta Yu pumping station cooperative
had acted as guarantor for the two men. The men were therefore released
and immediately pressed counter charges against Li and his father with
the greatest haste and efficiency. The wealthy Ta Yu landlord and other
leaders who were important persons in the cooperative as well as influential
in the area and the local office of the government district knew how to
handle such matters. And although the policemen themselves saw that the
two Ta Yu men were not hurt in the fight, the two men were nevertheless
able to purchase false

RELIGION AND MAGIC

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The twenty-fourth day of the fourth month is the birthday of the Hsin Hsing village god, Ta Shih Kung. Those villagers who have been working elsewhere normally come home for this *pai-pai*, and even some of the members of village families whose business or work has required them to move to the city return for this day and stay overnight or several days with relatives in the village. The main reason for this influx is that the celebration is one of the gayest and most festive of all those held during the year.

All families worship Ta Shih Kung in a joint *pai-pai* held in the courtyard of one of the largest *tsu* houses in the village. A shaman is present to exorcise any devils that may be near and to invite the god to eat the sacrificed food, the best the villagers have all year. Guests are invited from all over the area to join in the festivities, and for weeks or even months in advance the villagers issue invitations to relatives and friends. At the time of the *pai-pai*, the villagers even invite their neighbors' guests, if they happen to know them, to eat their food. People walk through the village, pounce upon acquaintances who are ambling along or who may have just come out of the house of another villager, and tug at their arms and clothing to get them into their homes to eat. (My wife and I were virtually dragged through seven different dinners that evening.) The villagers generally prepare so much food for the occasion that there is always enough for a few more, and they talk for months about the number of people they entertained that day. One old woman, a member of a relatively poor village family, boasted that she had had seventy guests at her house and that she had fed three tables of guests five times. Some of these guests stayed overnight and had to be fed again the next day. She spent NT \$700 (US \$19.50) on food and wine and had been saving her money for months for this occasion.

For the most part, all these guests reciprocate and invite the Hsin Hsing villagers to join them at the *pai-pai* celebrating the birthday of their own village god at a later date. The *pai-pai*, therefore, functions to maintain relationships with *ch'in ch'i* and friends and to enable families to meet new people. In addition, since the villages hold these *pai-pai* at different times, the people of the whole area are assured of a continuing source of entertainment.

The entertainment includes not only the good food and the contact with different people but also a puppet show performed by a professional group hired from a city. The puppet show is based on stories from dynastic history and is a source of delight to the villagers and their guests. Adults and children from neighboring villages usually wander over during the course of the day to watch the show. The carnival atmosphere of the occasion is augmented by the presence of vendors of food, sweets, sugarcane, and betel nut who come from Lukang and surrounding villages to sell their wares.

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example bolster the declining role of the village as a source of security and identification. Considering their potential, such men contribute relatively little to their villages.

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Coupled with this has been the more recent decline of the traditional landlord leadership as an effect of the Land Reform Program and an ever-increasing vacuum of qualified leadership which has developed in the village. When leadership was sorely needed, as in the Li Fan case for example, the villagers actually turned to me, the alien anthropologist, as a potential source of leadership and help. Many former leaders, now prefer not to become too involved in other people's problems or those of the village. In fact, it is now often difficult for villages to find qualified and respected men even to run for the office of mayor or to assume the responsibilities of a leadership role.

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The ever-increasing vacuum of qualified leadership affects not only the operation of the village but that of the *tsu* organizations. One important area of village life adversely affected by the lack of leadership is the apparently increasing inability to resolve local conflict by the traditional method of mediation which was usually carried on by respected *tsu*, village, or area leaders. A particular mediator was selected according to the relationship of the disputants and the nature of the conflict, which might involve intravillage or intervillage disputes over water for irrigation; disputes over landownership and property boundaries; or power struggles between families, especially between *tsu* organizations, over such questions as village administration or the expenditure of funds by village or *tsu* for religious or festive activities; and so on.

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Almost always, regardless of the nature of the dispute or the level on which it occurred, mediation had been sought and applied with these aims: first, that the scope and resolution of the conflict be kept localized so as not to invite possible government interference into village affairs, and, second, that the resolution permit the disputants to continue to live harmoniously together. Villagers felt a great degree of permanency since most, tied as they were to the land and to their village, were likewise tied by the particular kinds of relationships developed over the years with local people, both kin and non-kin. There were few opportunities to leave the area, land, or kinship group and go elsewhere so as to avoid the repercussions of an ill-settled dispute.

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In recent years, however, it has been becoming increasingly difficult to resolve conflict through mediation and to achieve these aims. In part this is a result of the deterioration of the accepted hierarchal relationship system on both the kin and non-kin levels. On the non-kin level the concept or code of *kan-ch'ing* (as discussed in Chapter 6) and the quality of interpersonal relations governed by it have been weakened. The situation developed largely when the traditional land

115 Just as my wife and I came to
 123 be genuinely fond of many of the villagers as people, so did the interpreter.
 123 His warm attitude toward the villagers was extremely important. The vil-
 124 lagers' impression of the interpreter—at least at the beginning—is likely
 to be transferred to the researcher. What the researcher says to the informant
 or hears from the informant must pass through the interpreter, who merely by
 tone of voice and facial expressions can either hinder or help in creating
 a warm and friendly relationship. Under such circumstances the researcher
 has little control over the situation. Although a single poor translation
 may produce some inaccurate data, a slight conflict in personality between
 interpreter and informant may cause the alienation of one and perhaps more
 of the informants.

124 On those occasions when the interpreter translated from Mandarin to
 English, I had the opportunity to check on the accuracy of his translations.
 Especially at the beginning of the fieldwork, I specifically requested that the
 interpreter translate from Mandarin. Since I knew Mandarin, I could make
 any necessary corrections in the translation or could at least discuss his trans-
 lation technique. It was hoped that any necessary improvements would then
 be carried into the translation of Japanese to Mandarin or English.

Throughout the research period the interpreter lived in the village as a
 member of our household. Through frequent discussions, he became quite
 familiar with the nature of the research and usually knew the objectives of
 each interview. Although the interviews were directed, they were of a free
 conversational type which permitted following up promising leads as they
 developed in the course of a conversation.

On frequent occasions it became necessary and feasible for the interpreter
 to carry on lengthy, uninterrupted discussions with an informant on some
 question raised during the course of the interview. Since the interpreter had
 proven himself to be accurate and reliable, such a situation was not detrimen-
 tal. But regardless of how good the interpreter is, something must be lost to
 the researcher, who in this case, more than ever the third party, must wait
 patiently to hear what has taken place between the interpreter and the in-
 formant. The interpreter's familiarity with the nature of the research can be
 of great help in such an interview situation.

But a serious problem may be created by the situation which has just been
 described. The interpreter may not be aware of points raised by his discussion
 with the informant which may need further investigation. The researcher
 may lose the opportunity to delve more deeply into leads which might be
 pertinent for his study. Under such a system something must be lost, but
 this is only one of the many problems inherent in an interview technique
 which relies on the use of an interpreter (Phillips 1959-1960).

At the same time, there are many positive things to be said for the use of
 an interpreter. The interview situation, to say the least, is not an easy one.
 For the researcher it is often quite wearisome not only to ask the questions
 and listen to answers but to keep the conversation flowing, always watching
 for information or a lead on a totally different subject. Such an interview
 does not usually go according to any schedule. In addition to all this, the
 researcher must record all the pertinent data, either in writing or, in my case,
 by committing it to memory for later recording. A well-trained interpreter

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may relieve the interviewer of some of these burdens and so, in many ways, actually improve the quality of the interview and the data obtained. A good interpreter may enable the interviewer to mull things over and to concentrate on the possible implications of the data obtained while the interpreter discusses things with the informant.

Another initial problem was my original lack of familiarity with details of local etiquette. It is entirely too easy for an unsuspecting anthropologist to commit a *faux pas* which could permanently affect his relations with people. An interpreter who is native to the area and hence aware of local customs can be of great value here. He may be better equipped to interpret signs or hints of the end of an interview, or of what to do in certain situations.

I found that once the interpreter was familiar enough with the nature of the research and the interview technique, it was possible to have him carry on certain types of routine interviews while I was busy recording earlier joint interviews. The interpreter was able in this way to help collect kinship data as well as detailed descriptions of the agricultural cycle and techniques.

As already noted, during the greater part of the village study, I usually recorded interviews well after the interview was concluded. Therefore, to provide a possible check on my understanding of the translation and also on my memory, the interpreter read over the interview for possible inaccuracies before it was considered acceptable. Entire interviews were then recorded on unisort cards and carbon duplicates. The use of the unisort card system later facilitated the cross-categorizing of the field data.

Whenever possible, I conducted interviews in Mandarin by myself. This, of course, could only be done with Mandarin speakers such as local policemen, teachers, younger village people, and other villagers who had picked up Mandarin while working in the capital city of Taipei. Speaking Mandarin, especially with local officials, greatly aided me in establishing better rapport and in obtaining access to important official documents and statistics. Occasionally, when the interpreter was not available for translation of Taiwanese, a Mandarin-speaking villager—such as a young boy—could be used for this purpose.

My wife, who had an adequate command of Mandarin and knew the Taiwanese language somewhat better than I, helped with the research. She interviewed women and girls of the village, often using young people as translators from the Taiwanese to Mandarin. Since she was allowed to go where a man was not admitted, such as the room of a prospective bride about to leave her parents' home, she could advantageously observe events closed to all men.

1:Gallin E-4,5 (1957-1958) 1966

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NOTES

The district police office as well as the local officials in the district Public Office will also assume this function on an unofficial basis.

Chapter 6: Personal Relationships and Cooperation Within and Beyond the Village

- ¹ Some villagers even approached me with the hope that I might act as their leader. Because of their insistence, I did participate in a very minor way. The minimal participation, however, yielded extremely valuable insights into village interpersonal relationships. Also, after this occasion, I found most villagers much more willing to aid me in my research. For a more detailed discussion of my involvement in this case and the consequences to my field work, see my "A Case for Intervention in the Field."
- ² Several villagers also insisted that I be part of Hsin Hsing village's delegation. This turned out to be my only opportunity to attend any kind of mediation session.

Chapter 7: Life History of the Villager

- ¹ A woman's menstrual blood is also considered unclean, and a wash amah employed in a Chinese household is not expected to wash the mistress's undergarments if they have been stained with menstrual blood.
- ² This figure is based on the Chinese calculation of age. A child is said to be one year old at the time of his birth and two years old on the first Chinese New Year after his birth. This boy is therefore fourteen or fifteen by Western calculations.
- ³ A somewhat similar kind of arrangement is reported by Robert J. Smith (1936:77-78) for Japan.
- ⁴ If a woman dies before she bears a child or before a child is adopted into the family, her name is not recorded on the family ancestral tablet because she lacks descendants to worship her.
- ⁵ In some instances when a family does not have daughters of their own they may take a "recognized daughter" (or a "recognized son") who in a sense is temporarily adopted and who will then come to mourn and worship at the funeral of her "recognized parents." The girl is usually the daughter of close family friends, and she will still worship her own parents. Sometimes a family may also give their girl as a recognized daughter if she is a sickly child and a fortune-teller recommends such action to avoid further illness.

Chapter 8: Religion and Magic in Hsin Hsing Village

- ¹ During 1957-1958 government troops were billeted in the temple and at the same time were renovating it.
- ² The belief in the ubiquity of Matsu's powers, however, is not universal among the Taiwanese. Norma Diamond, an anthropologist working in southern Taiwan in 1980-1981, has told me that Matsu is not considered

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PREFACE

Because my husband is an anthropologist who specializes in Chinese studies, I came in 1959 to live in a small country village in Northern Taiwan. For the next two years, home was a Chinese farm house shared with the large family of Lim. Why the Lims of Peihotien agreed to take us into their family is unclear. Our rent was certainly higher than any Taiwanese would pay, but the risk of renting to us was far greater. Many of the people in Peihotien had never seen an American before and most had never spoken to one. Our landlord, Lim Chieng-cua, evidently decided that our odd pale eyes, large noses, and unhealthy white skin did not necessarily mean we were any more unpredictable than a Taiwanese stranger. Lim Chieng-cua may have owed a social debt to the schoolmaster who introduced us to him, or he may have hoped to gain some advantage from America by sheltering its students. Perhaps he simply wished to indulge his curiosity, or perhaps he hoped that our presence in his house might in some way ease the strains that were developing within his family.

It was not until we had spent many months in the house of Lim that we began to appreciate the magnitude of our good fortune. For two generations this branch of the Lim family had held the unofficial but effective leadership of Peihotien—respected and, in some cases, feared by their fellow villagers. As guests in their home, we found we had little to fear from opportunists or thieves, for none would risk angering our mentors. We also found, however, that we had rented a certain responsibility towards the good name of the family. If we bargained so carelessly as to allow ourselves to be cheated of a few dollars, we had to a certain extent allowed the Lims to be cheated. When the village carpenter overcharged us, Lim Chieng-cua felt it necessary to retaliate with a subtle, but public, social insult. On another occasion, Lim Chieng-cua explained to us that for the sake of our good name we should eat at least one course at every village banquet to which we were invited—even if this meant attending a dozen or more banquets in a single evening. He later told our assistant that we must be urged to do this for the sake of the Lims' good name.

114 In time I began to refer to the Lims as "our" family, at first jokingly,
123 but later with an odd sense of identification. I would be guilty of gross
sentimentality and naive social science if I pretended that we became
"members" of the Lim family. After a few months, however, the family
became so used to our presence that formal expressions of politeness gave
way to natural expressions, angry quarrels were not cooled by my en-
trance, nor were frustrated tears removed to another room. The objec-
tivity I retained toward family quarrels and factions was due more to
the undeniable gulf between our two cultures and to my own timidity
than to any scientific principles. The tension between Lim Chieng-cua and
his elder brother's widow became to me a conflict between two good
people, both of whom deserved better treatment at the hands of the
other—not an abstract problem of conflicting authority in the Chinese
family system. The sad life of the pretty young prostitute in our family
and the behavior of her shrewish mother was personally distressing when
it should have been only an excellent example of the way in which a
culture with no alternatives to marriage and family handles the problem
of the unmarried and the barren.

114 Now, some six years later and many thousand miles away, I can
re-read field notes with less emotion and evaluate what happened in the
house of Lim in less subjective terms. In the past year or so I have drawn
together from our field data the various bits of information and inter-
views we gathered from the Lims and their neighbors and combined them
into a narrative. The picture of the Lim family that results is sketched
by a foreigner, but the foreigner has tried not to attach American motiva-
tions to Taiwanese behavior. Of necessity the ordering of some events
and the effect these events had on some lives is based on my conjecture.
I have, I hope, made it apparent to the reader when I am guessing about
something and when I have been told about it—and for that matter, when
114 I doubt the validity of what I have been told. All the quotations are
124 translations of comments made by family members, their neighbors, and
[A] their relatives. With many members of the family my communication
was clumsy because of my and their weakness in Mandarin (the official
language of China) and my total lack of Hokkien (the local Chinese
dialect). Fortunately, my assistant, a girl who grew up in a similar
village, developed during her work with us the invaluable capacity to
interpret without seeming to be a part of the conversation. She had,
moreover, a phenomenal memory that enabled her to recall as much as
fifteen minutes of conversation verbatim and to render the content of

Houses and Families

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man is expected to provide his ancestors with the best he can possibly manage. The Lim altar is tastefully simple, but of excellent wood and careful carving. The top is cluttered with the usual collection of ugly vases, gaudy lanterns, fussy brass candle holders, an elaborately carved wooden stand to hold the half-moon-shaped divining blocks, and some delicate pewter wine cups used only to offer drink to the gods and ancestors. Besides the ancestral tablets, the altar also holds two glass boxes containing images of the Goddess of Mercy and Tu Ti Kung. The latter are only decoration. Although they have vague protective powers, they are not imbued with the significance of the images residing in temples. On the wall behind the altar are a picture of the Eight Immortals and a large panel covered with the character for long life repeated in its hundred different forms. The only other decorations in the room are a Chinese painting on a scroll and various inscriptions painted or pasted over doors and windows to insure the family's good health, prosperity, and fertility.

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When my husband and I moved into the Lim family home, we were delighted to be given as our sleeping room the tiny room directly in back of the family altar. The room is separated from the guest hall by only half a wall topped by a lattice screen. There was little chance of our sleeping through any of the religious ceremonies performed at dawn or during the night. Much to my surprise, the sleeping room that should have housed the head of the family became our office. It had been empty since the death of Lim Chieng-cua's father. Later, when I came to understand the structure and tensions of the family, I was impressed by Lim Chieng-cua's discretion, and the diplomacy with which he had solved a vexing problem. At the time, I was simply pleased at the ease with which we had inserted ourselves into the very center of a Taiwanese family. We had little peace and quiet, and no privacy, but for our purposes the situation was ideal.

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The remainder of the Lim's front wing is taken up with sleeping rooms—Lim Chieng-cua and his wife and six children on one side, his elder brother's widow, Lim A-pou, her married son and his family on the other. At one end, in a room that would have been the kitchen in a smaller house, is the dining room, one of the few in the village. Its elegance is confined to its title. Though fairly large, the room is cluttered with crocks of pickled vegetables, the big rice bin, a foot-treadle sewing machine, and odds and ends of farm equipment. In the center of the room is a high, round eating table with an assortment of tall stools around it. The stools are drawn from those stacked in the

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*159 next morning accompanied by her father's elder sister, a tiny, trim old
*596 lady dressed in black. Instead of summoning Ng Kui-lian, who should
*593 have been present at any negotiations between the two, Chui-ieng
578 informed her husband that she was leaving the family permanently. I
[609] cannot imagine what reaction she expected from her husband, but
[566] from her subsequent behavior it is clear that she didn't expect what
she received. Lim Chieng-cua agreed readily and said he would send
someone immediately to summon the police that they might remove
her name from the household registration and issue her a new police
book. After a stunned silence, Chui-ieng threw all her good sense to
the winds and with the biting sarcasm that has cost her so much
happiness said, "That will be fine, won't it? You will really be a
famous man now." She planted her final taunt with venom. "Yes,
everyone will talk about how great the Lim family is now." The aunt,
shocked less by her niece's outburst than by the dark red color ap-
pearing on Lim Chieng-cua's face, made an attempt to avert what was
[828] to come. She shouted at her niece, "Look at his face! You know his
health isn't good. It isn't good for his health to get so angry!" But she
was too late. In a frenzy, Lim Chieng-cua beat his wife about the
head, grabbed her by the hair, and threw her to the cement floor
where he punished her brutally with his feet. The aunt was frozen in
[123] horror and A-bok and his family were long ago at work in the fields. I
had to abandon my anthropological immunity and participate in some
direct foreign intervention. Lim Chieng-cua was literally shaking with
rage when he left the room—his arms were jerking uncontrollably.
The aunt's first statement when her tongue thawed was a typical
Taiwanese reaction to someone's physical injury. She began to scold
Chui-ieng.

By the time her foster mother arrived that afternoon, Chui-ieng's
right eye was swollen closed and her ear and the side of her head were
discolored with bruises and clotted blood. As soon as she saw her, the
mother began to cry, "It's all my fault. It's all my fault. Oh, to see my
daughter like this! Your grandmother and your father said that we
shouldn't marry you to a man with such a bad temper, but I wanted
this marriage. It is all my fault!"

Chui-ieng replied by begging her mother to take her home. "If I
stay here he will kill me. He will kill me, I know it. He said he would
[571] kill our daughter." The rest of that day and all of the next a parade of
people passed through Chui-ieng's bedroom, and streams of curious

chapter 12

[p.141]

A
GIFT
OF
PRIDE

During the years we lived in Peihotien, my husband often turned to Lim Chieng-cua for solutions to the puzzles of village life. We were rarely disappointed by his suggestions. Many of the villagers, and even some of the educated men who are at ease in the classrooms of Taipei, shook their heads at our queries and gave us the thoughtless answer: "That's just the way it is done." Unlike his neighbors, Lim Chieng-cua enjoyed turning our questions over in his mind, often showing us that the error was in the question. We came to rely on his insights to send us down a more fruitful path in our search for understanding. It is not easy for a man who knows no other way of life, and who is a deeply involved participant in the life he knows, to step away from it, and to view it through an outsider's eyes. It is not easy, and it is often not pleasant, but for the Lims this has become a habit. Lim Chieng-cua is not the contemplative oriental so often described and so rarely seen. If he were, he would not have been of so much assistance to us, nor would his opinions have been so respected by his fellows. In the closed life of a Taiwanese village, the unusual quirks of a man's personality are accepted in the same way as a crippled leg: that's just the way he is. But, even the slightest suspicion of a more basic peculiarity—a man who questions the premises his neighbors call fact—leads to doubt and distrust. Because of the long hours he wasted talking with us, some of Lim Chieng-cua's neighbors wondered at his patience, others grew suspicious of his motives and ours, and the

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#154 more acute were uneasy at his obvious enjoyment of profitless discus-
#596 sion. Several times I saw this uneasiness in A-bok's face—a face and
• 123 perhaps a character more similar to Lim Han-ci's. Thiam-hok's
124 dreamy thoughts and his father's intellectual speculations suggest
828 weakness to the villager. And in a world where each meal can be
measured in hours of hard labor, they are a weakness. I hope his
neighbors concluded after our departure that the hours Lim Chieng-cua
wasted with us were only a modern variation of the hours he wasted
in the company of his mistresses.

#159 I learned as much about the economics of the Lim household
#596 and the Lim factory as I could hope to from a rational businessman. I
123 did not, however, learn anything from Lim Chieng-cua about the
124 problems that beset his family. We always talked around them, ad-
dressing ourselves to the general problem of why families cannot
achieve the ideal to which they all give lip service. My own notions
about the tensions that tear apart the extended family, many of them
based on simple observation of the Lims, were presented to the head
of the Lims and after some thought agreed to by him, but his ex-
amples were always in terms of some other family. There was a
reserve, often camouflaged by dry humor, that prevented me from
being as ruthless with personal questions as I was with other villagers.
Lim Chieng-cua held in his mind a clear picture of his family as he
wanted us to see it, and even if he thought we might be aware of the
flaws in this picture, he was not willing to discuss them. We were to
see a thriving, industrious farm family, supplementing its income with a
moderately lucrative home factory. Family members all contributed to the
common pot and received from the common pot, with final authority resting
in the senior male, the head of the household. This was not a simple
game of presenting a shining face to the foreigner. We were only by-
standers. The more important audience was the village, the larger world
of Hotien, and distant but important relatives. It was for many years a
deception in which the entire family participated, with varying degrees
of willingness. It had not always been a deception.

#159 Lim A-pou's dissatisfaction with the administration of the family
#596 budget was more openly expressed during the second year of my stay
in the village, and in terms of simple facts, she was often justified in
her complaints. She refuses to accept, however, that a man who must
[364] obtain custom from city businessmen must dress better than a farmer,
[291] that school-age children require more clothes than children rolling

#159 people from saying of his family "they are just like us now" was
-596 typical of both his mother's and his uncle's attitude toward the kind of
standards they should maintain in the eyes of their neighbors. But for
Lim A-pou, the standards, if simpler, were certainly more rigid, and
Lim Chieng-cua did not always behave in accordance with her standards.

#159 Beyond this, there was still the influence of Lim Han-ci. Ancestral
#696 tablets occupy a prominent place in the homes of Peihotien, and
969 given the stimulation of daily rituals, one might expect that memories
765 of the dead occupy a prominent place in the thoughts of the living.
• 123 But Lim Han-ci's influence on the lives of his descendants is something
more than can be explained in terms of ancestor worship. My
husband was particularly impressed by this on a day when he joined
the family in a climb into the mountains behind Tapu to clean Lim
Han-ci's grave. Although the entire family was present, it was not
marked by the strain characteristic of their dealings with each other
on every other day of the year. They were naturally somewhat hesitant
about making jokes at one another's expense, so accustomed had
they become to quarreling, but much to my husband's surprise, they
all joined in on the fun of making jokes about the presence of a
foreigner. Playing on the Chinese way of referring to all foreigners as
[609] "foreign ghosts," Lim Chieng-cua wondered what his father would
think about their bringing a ghost to help clean his grave, and Lim
A-bok laughingly suggested that since all of the people in the village
called my husband Lim anyway, they might just introduce him as an
adopted son. This kind of light-heartedness continued all through the
day. If one had not known the family at home, it would be easy to
think that no discord existed among them. Perhaps it would not be
too far-fetched to imagine that on this one day when their thoughts
were all turned toward Lim Han-ci, they were embarrassed to reveal
even to themselves what had happened to his family since he had left
them.

#159 The day we left Peihotien, our pedi-cab bristling with suitcases
-596 and gifts, Lim A-pou and her sister-in-law, Lim Chui-ien, stood
123 together in the doorway of the house of Lim to bow farewell. The
next day at the Taipei Airport, Lim Chieng-cua, confident and at ease
in a well-tailored dark suit, wished us a good voyage and a speedy
return. He was accompanied by his nephew, A-bok, looking uncomfortable
in the suit he usually wore only at New Year, shifting his
calloused, work-stained hands as though they were an embarrassing

A Gift of Pride

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package. We took our leave of the descendants of old Lim Han-ci as they wished us to take it, carrying an image of a family given dignity and honor by remaining united where others had failed. People in China make no effort to remove the price tags from the gifts they give. The fact that we could calculate so closely the cost of the image the Lims wished to send with us only added to its value, for them and for us.

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epilogue

[p.148]



SEPARATE STOVES



* 596 A few months after our return to America, we received a letter from a
592 friend who had recently visited the Lims. The price was too high, the
578 innovation has failed. The Lims have divided their property and es-
tablished independent households. Lim A-bok continues to cultivate
all the family land, but he now works Lim Chieng-cua's share of the
land as a tenant. The family remains in the same house. They con-
tinue to share the guest hall and to worship there together, but some
of the doors connecting their apartments have been nailed closed. The
final admission of defeat is the presence of a new kitchen in the back
of the house: they have divided the stove.

* 596 Our physical presence in the house was obviously the last delay
592 of the inevitable. With our rooms scattered as they were through the
578 building, it would have been difficult to arrange an equitable division
• 123 without disturbing our living arrangements and creating even more
controversy over the terms of the property settlement. The Americans
and their rent were part of the estate. No matter how much she
desired the division, even Lim A-pou was unwilling to have it take
place with the acrimony common to most family divisions. If there
had to be a step down, it must be made with dignity. Perhaps they
viewed those final months of waiting as a sacrifice to Lim Han-ci—
that his hope for a united family of many generations living under
one roof might be a reality somewhere, even if only in the minds of
foreigners.

* 596 Essentially, the house of Lim is no more. From the point of view
178 of their neighbors, the Lims are "just like us now." They have re-
769 turned to the cycle of growth and division which is the Chinese farm-
[183] er's compromise with an ideal. But, on the altar in their guest hall
there remains the ancestral tablet of Lim Han-ci. The strength of his
personality and of his memory held them together for many years. In
the end, it was not enough.

121 men) in a village house for a month at a time, each month
122 a different house. In this room I conducted some inter-
views but primarily it was used for writing, organizing
data, rest, and sleeping. I also took most of my meals
with the household in which I had a room. This tech-
nique allowed me to become an intimate part, a boarder, in
several different households. People could be on their
best behavior for a few days, but it proved impossible to
act unnaturally for an entire month.

During the last eight months, we moved into one of
the two villages, Erhlei, in a household of our own.
Since the two villages had one common boundary, were both
located in the same li, and the village centers were sep-
arated only by the equivalent of one and a half city
blocks, the particular village location did not appear to
be important. We were quite surprised at the differences
resulting from our establishment of a residence in Talei

- 123 Li. We experienced a higher level of acceptance although
we felt we had already established excellent relations.
We were asked to serve in the Parent Teacher's Association
and were now taxed for school and temple affairs. Al-
though our children had visited the villages many times,
they quickly established their own network of friends and
associates and our son attended the local school one day
a week.

- 123 Full acceptance is never possible. An American of
609 European descent must accept the fact he will always be
considered a rich, highly educated, kao pi tsu (big nose
or Westerner). There are various clues to evaluate your
123 level of acceptance. Your relative status may be asses-
609 sed by where you are assigned to sit at a dinner in some-
554 one's house for locations at the table are ranked in order
574 of importance. At a big festival such as a wedding for
which there are many tables, relative importance is also
assigned to different tables. For example, although the
groom goes from table to table toasting the guests and
being toasted in turn, he starts with the most important
table and ends with the least. At the start of our
study, we were the most prestigious guests at every func-
tion, even ranking above the mayor of the large nearby
town of Hsin Tien. As time passed, we moved down the
tables in rank position, joining the richer villagers but
sitting below local village officials. At the last wed-
ding, my wife sat at the lowest ranking regular table in
the kitchen with the women in the immediate family since
one woman in the family was one of her closest friends in
the village and I sat at the third-ranking table with my
123 "sworn brothers." Three months before I left, I had
[573] achieved a high level of acceptance by becoming a member
of a chieh pai hsuing ti⁵ (sworn brothers association).
[601] A final key may be found in the term of address which

- 123 changed from the inevitable Ba Syan Sheng (Mr. Barnett)
601 to a kinship term or A Wei (Intimate A plus my first name).
My wife was called A ku (FaSi) by most village children.

- 114 We employed a number of research assistants,
124 primarily relying on three, two male and one female. One
was well-trained and had had extensive experience with
other American scholars. The other two were young college
graduates, both with majors in agricultural economics and
rural sociology. All three were fluent in Mandarin,
Japanese, Taiwanese, and English. Additionally, each
had a warm pleasant personality and quickly became popu-
lar with villagers. The three worked interchangeably with
myself and my wife in both villages. Sometimes they worked
alone and sometimes with one or the other of us or both.
124 In field work with an interpreter-assistant, there are
127 always problems in assuring faithful reproduction. No one
language was universal for all villagers although Taiwanese
approached it. Mandarin was a poor second. Constant re-
checking of data through repeated interviews with the same
informant and other informants with regard to the same
data is a necessary and regular part of anthropological
field research. By using different assistants for inter-
views regarding the same data with different informants,
one is also able to assess the accuracy and ability of the
122 assistant. We had studied Mandarin formally before leaving
the United States and continued formal study in Taipei.

- 123 Finally, mention must be made of the fact that there were two anthropologists in the family, one male and one female. There are some situations in which a male has a significant advantage, and others, a female. For example, I had a distinct advantage with regard to men's drinking parties, dirty-story telling, sex life, etc. On the other hand, it proved exceedingly difficult for me to interview women under 30 on many subjects and with regard to sex, almost any female at an age under 70 was nearly impossible. Indeed, for an anthropological study of Chinese society, I believe a Western woman has an advantage. She is fully accepted as a woman by the women and simultaneously is almost accepted as a man by the men. Although we each studied separate villages, we inevitably participated in the affairs of both. Discussion of data and interpretations constantly stimulated and encouraged both of us for each could bring a fresh insight into the other's problems.

- 124 In addition to the usual techniques, there were
125 three special approaches. Because we eventually desired to compare the two villages, ten months after commencing field work, we jointly prepared an open-ended interview schedule which was independently administered to all adults in each of the two villages. An interview schedule prepared by Dr. Gallin was administered to a sample of village
124 residents. Finally, a number of interviews were conducted

427 .17 chia of paddy field from the barber. The absentee landlord is relatively rare, often a former villager who migrated to the city.

- 123 Sanlei villagers also own land outside the village
- 423 but we were only permitted to check official records inside the village boundaries of Sanlei and Erhlei. It is difficult to obtain accurate figures through interviews since there is a fear of tax increases. As a result, the disparity between villagers' reports and official holdings was striking. Records of outside holdings kept being refined all during the study by following men to work in the fields. People would reveal more about their neighbors' holdings than their own.

- 423 Some of the categories and grades are inaccurately
- 127 recorded on official records. No piece is overgraded be-
- 651 cause the township land official is contacted to report losses, i.e., caused by erosion, in order to have the taxes reduced. On the other hand, improved land is not called to the attention of officials. Some of the dry land is really paddy land and some of the mountain land is now dry
- [654] land with orange orchards or tea fields. Over a four year period there was a Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (J.C.R.R.) and farmers' association sponsored soil conservation program for mountain land. When a farmer constructed proper terracing, he was rewarded with United
- [651] States surplus flour. Only about 60% of the mountain-land

463 give legal advice but anyone can wash the car or cut the
171 grass. Not as well known perhaps are the restrictions
on plumbing, electrical work, and the like. The force
necessary to restrict such work to specialists in the
United States largely depends on the law, police, and the
courts. Although some of the enforcement of the division
of labor in China is through the legal system as in the
case of medicine, there is considerably less dependence
on the government. Rather, there is a set of cultural
values specifying which tasks are appropriate for experts
468 and which are not. The community members exert social
829 pressure on an individual who does a task customarily re-
626 served for a specialist. He is said to be "breaking some-
one's rice bowl" (see Glossary C). The statement illus-
trates a basic understanding of the total system. A man
earns his rice⁴ by exchanging an activity and if someone
else performs that activity in his place, he will go
hungry. If too many people did not hire specialists, the
specialists could not purchase food, and the whole system
would break down. This was about the manner that several
village men were able to extend the meaning of the quoted
phrase.

463 I learned the extent of social pressure on trans-
626 grassors the week we moved into the village. I nailed
• 123 some screening over five windows in our house and this
shocked many villagers. Very politely, at least a dozen

- 463 men (not in a group) told me that Kao Mu-li in the next
626 village was very good at that kind of work, if he was em-
• 123 ployed the job would last longer, and right now he was
not busy. I immediately hired him to build my screen door
and paid above standard rates for the job to make up for
my inadvertent error. This price soon became common know-
ledge throughout the area.

463 Other similar examples were witnessed. The village
626 barber, Liao An-peí, was seeking a wife and during our
stay, built a new house with one of its rooms designated
for his shop. As the building neared completion, he be-
lieved he had spent too much money. Although he had hired
a painter to put one coat of paint on the woodwork, he con-
sidered doing the second coat himself to save money.
Since he had never painted before, he picked up a brush
while the painter was putting on the first coat and painted
a window sill. Everyone in the shop laughed at him and
called others to come and see Liao An-peí painting. For
days afterwards, although I could detect no difference in
the comparative quality of the workmanship, visitors were
shown the window-sill that Liao An-peí painted. This al-
ways brought a smile and often, an additional comical re-
mark. Liao An-peí decided to omit the second coat until
after he saved more money. He explained that business men
had to be extra careful. Since almost every man in the
village was his customer, if they got angry, he would lose

534 Careful collection of data is necessary in obtain-
554 ing marriage rates by types for there is a tendency to
183 disguise the latter two types as if they were the highly
123 rated arranged form. One man in Sanlei once told me he
had an "arranged marriage" and did not see his bride until
the wedding. I later learned he and his wife were from
the same village, they grew up in homes only 100 feet
apart, and both played on the same school tag-ball team.
(For discussion of marriage events, see Chapter VIII.)

Incorporation of the Bride

593 Marriage does not make the bride a full-fledged
851 member of her new family for a wife attains a status in
her husband's home only through her children, especially
sons (C. K. Yang, 1959a:89). This value, true for much
of China, has been clearly expressed by Fei:

. . . the legal act of marriage, although preceding
the birth of a child, always anticipates the reali-
zation of parenthood . . . the full status of a
woman is acquired after the birth of a child. Sim-
ilarly, the affinal relation remains impotent un-
less a child is born . . . (1939:30).

This is also true in Sanlei, a wife is not fully incor-
porated into her husband's chia until after she has a
1397 child. As will be discussed later, an adopted child may
1587 be substituted for a natural child. In spite of the fact
1842 that the literature suggests that barren women could be
divorced (Lang, 1946:40), no one in Sanlei had ever heard
of it happening.

583 ethnographies has a higher percentage of adopted-in hus-
558 bands than Sanlei and Hsu states that such a husband does
not have low status (1967:98). Sanlei villagers indicate
it is a natural process to adopt husbands, what else can
a family without a son do?

583 The frequency of this form of marriage has impor-
183 tant implications for the role of women. There are prob-
• 123 ably regional variations across China with respect to
rates but, as stated, rarely are competent data provided
in ethnographic studies to support the summaries and ab-
stractions. Because of the low status usually claimed for
chao fu marriage, it is likely the estimates by villagers
on which the summary may be based would be low. Among 15
Sanlei men, the average guess at the incidence of chao fu
marriage was 1 in 10 with a single high guess of 1 in 7 by
an old man. Since the actual incidence was higher than
1 in 4, this inaccuracy is significant. If this disser-
tation was based on interviews and the impressions of in-
formants rather than on actual counting, a quite different
picture would likely have emerged.

593 Many, if not all accounts of the Chinese family
583 discuss the great period of stress for the new bride when
she enters her husband's home as a virtual stranger as one
important factor contributing to her lowly condition. Con-
versely, few reports discuss the role of men in the case
of the chao fu marriage who enter the bride's home as a